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STUD EARRING WITH A REMOVABLE DANGLE ELEMENT

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to jewelry that adorns the ear, and more particularly, to earrings which have a top stud element attached to the ear and a bottom dangle element removably attached to the top stud element so that it dangles therefrom.

Stud earrings and earring drops which dangle therefrom have been around for a long time. The top stud element typically consists of a cylindrical basket which holds a round stone therein, a wire post attached to a circular underside of the cylindrical basket for inserting the stud into a hole in the ear, and a nut engagable with the post for securing the stud element to the ear. The cylindrical basket typically has four or six prongs which hold the stone from a top side thereof, a seat which holds the stone from a bottom side thereof, and a circular, flat base below the seat to which the prongs and the post are attached. Traditionally, there have been two ways to dangle an element off such a stud earring, either from the post or from the basket. When the dangle element is suspended from the post, it typically includes a metal protrusion which extends out from the dangle and which has a hole punched therethrough so that the post can be inserted therethrough and then through the ear hole. When the

dangle element is attached to the basket, the basket typically has a loop which extends out therefrom, and the dangle has a hook which engages the loop so that the dangle is freely suspended from the top stud. Alternatively, the wire hook may be positioned on the basket and the loop on the dangle element with the same effect.

A revolution in the design of the stud basket provides for a conically shaped basket instead of the traditional cylindrical basket. The conical baskets are typically formed by either two, three, four or six wires which originate at a point and conically extend out therefrom to form the basket. The post is attached at the point where the wires meet. The conical basket arrangement permits the top stud to be inserted deeper into the ear than its cylindrical counterpart and therefore the stud does not "flip or droop over" as is typical with the cylindrical baskets. However, a compromise of the conical basket arrangement has been that it is even more difficult to removably attach a dangling element because there is less surface area to work with on the basket.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a jewelry design for adorning an ear which includes a conically-shaped stud mounting extending conically outward from a conical point to form a conical basket for securing a stone therein, a post with a near end attached to the conical point and a far end, and a

nut engageable with the far end of the post for securing the stud mounting to the ear; a dangling element for suspension below the stud mounting; and an intermediary connecting member which engages an exterior surface of the conical basket, and which includes a jump ring extending outward therefrom for flexibly engaging the dangling element so that it is removably suspendable below the stud mounting.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is perspective view of a jewelry design according to the teachings of the present invention.

Figure 2 is a side view of the jewelry design shown in Figure 1, with the dangle element fixedly and flexibly connected to the intermediary connecting member.

Figure 3 is a perspective view of the intermediary connecting member shown in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 4 is an exploded perspective view of a second embodiment of the jewelry design according to the teachings of the present invention.

Figure 5 is an exploded perspective view of a third embodiment of the jewelry design according to the teachings of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF ILLUSTRATIVE EMBODIMENTS

Figures 1-3 illustrates a first exemplary embodiment of a jewelry design 10 for adorning an ear (not shown) according to the teachings of the present invention, and which includes a stud earring 12, a

dangling element 14, and an intermediary connecting member 16. The jewelry design 10 is made of a precious jewelry metal such as platinum, gold or silver. The individual components are constructed by any of the well known jewelry fabrication methods including lost wax casting, stamping, or hand fabrication.

The stud earring 12 includes a conically-shaped stud basket 20 having three wires extending conically and equidistantly outward from a point of attachment 22 to each other to form a conical basket for securing a round stone 25 therein. Stated another way, this embodiment, as well as the other embodiments discussed below, provides a conically-shaped basket, i.e. support, for a stone having two or more wires that extend obliquely from a common point 22.A post 28 with a near end 30 attached to the conical point 22 and a far end 32, and a nut 36 engagable with the far end 32 of the post 28 for securing the conically-shaped stud basket 20 to the ear. An optional seat 38 is shown as a wire ring attached to an inner surface of each of the three wires of the conically-shaped stud basket 20. The round stone 25 is set into the conically-shaped stud basket 20 so that it rests on the seat 38 and is secured therein by the prong ends 40 of the three wires. If the seat 38 is not used, then the stone is set against the three wires. The nut 36 frictionally engages the post 28 to secure the stud earring 12 to the ear. Other post-type engagement

systems, such as, for instance, a threaded post and a screw nut may also be used.

The dangling element 14 has a wire loop, chain link or hook 46 extending therefrom. The dangle element 14 may be of any shape or size which can be supported from a persons ear lobe, provided that the wire hook 46 is accessible and flexibly attaches to the intermediary connecting member 16. If a wire hook 46 is used then the dangle element 14 is removable from the intermediary connecting member 16, while if a wire loop or chain link (see Figure 2) is used then the dangle element 14 is fixedly and flexibly attached to intermediary connecting member 16. This latter arrangement facilitates ease of use of the present invention.

The intermediary connecting member 16 permits removable flexible engagement of the conically shaped stud mounting 20 and the dangle element 14. The intermediary connecting member 16 can be of any shape or size so long as it fits over the post 28 and to engage an exterior surface of one or more of the wires forming the conically-shaped stud basket 20, and so long as the intermediary connecting member 16 is disposed behind the conically-shaped stud basket 20. In this manner, the connecting member 16 is not generally visible from a frontal elevation. The intermediary connecting member 16 is thus sandwiched between the wearer's ear lobe and the stud basket 20 so as to keep the dangle

element 14 in proper alignment with respect to the stud basket 20.

The intermediary connecting member 16 includes a jump ring 52 and three legs 60. The jump ring 52 extends outward from the legs 60 in a downward direction for removably and flexibly engaging the wire loop or hook 46 of the dangling element 14. The jump ring 52 can be angled with respect to the legs 60 so that the dangle element 14 lines up with the front of the stud mounting 20. Referring specifically to Figure 3, each of the three legs 60 is connected to the other two legs at a point 70 so as to form a triangular shape. Notches 72 can be concavely fraised at each of the three points 70 where the legs 60 are connected to each other for optimally engaging an exterior surface of a respective one of the three wires forming the conically-shaped stud basket 20. The notches 72 allow the intermediary connecting member 16 to sits closer against the stud mounting 20. A beveled area 74 can be formed at the center of each of the three legs 60 so that the intermediary connecting member 16 does not engage the stone when the intermediary connecting member 16 is sandwiched against the stud mounting 20.

Figure 4 illustrates a second exemplary embodiment of the present invention in which there is provided a stud earring 112, a dangling element 114, and an intermediary connecting member 116. The stud earring 112 includes a conically-shaped stud basket

120 having four wires extending conically and equidistantly outward from a point of attachment 122 to each other to form the conical basket for securing a square stone 123 therein, a post 128 with a near end 130 attached to the conical point 122 and a far end 132, and a nut 136 engagable with the far end 132 of the post 128 for securing the conically-shaped stud basket 120 to the ear. An optional seat not shown but similar to that of FIG. 1 can be integrally formed with each of the three wires of the conically-shaped stud basket 120 to provide support for the square stone 123 therein. The square stone 123 is set into the conically-shaped stud basket 120 so that it rests on the seat 138 and is secured therein by the prong ends 140 of the three wires. If the seat 138 is not used, then the stone 123 is set against the four wires.

The dangling element 114 has a wire loop or hook 146 extending therefrom and is the same in structure and function as that shown in the first embodiment. The intermediary connecting member 116 permits removable flexible engagement of the conically shaped stud mounting 120 and the dangle element 114. The intermediary connecting member 116 is shaped to fit over the post 128 and to engage an exterior surface of each of the wires forming the conically-shaped stud basket 120 in such a way that the intermediary connecting member 116 is disposed behind the conically-shaped stud basket 120. In this manner, the connecting member 116 is not generally

visible from a frontal elevation. The intermediary connecting member 116 is thus sandwiched between the wearer's ear lobe and the stud basket 120.

The intermediary connecting member 116 includes a jump ring 152 and four legs 160. The jump ring 152 extends outward from a midpoint of one of the legs 160 in a downward direction for removably and flexibly engaging the wire loop or hook 146 of the dangling element 114. The jump ring 152 can be angled with respect to the legs 160 so that the dangle element 114 lines up with the front of the stud mounting 120. Each of the four legs 160 is connected to two other legs at points 170 so as to form a square shape. Notches 172 can be concavely fraised at each of the four points 170 where the legs 160 are connected to each other for optimally engaging an exterior surface of a respective one of the four wires forming the conically-shaped stud basket 120. The notches 172 allow the intermediary connecting member 116 to sit closer against the stud mounting 120. A beveled area 174 can be formed at the center of each of the four legs 160 so that the intermediary connecting member 116 does not engage the stone 123 when the intermediary connecting member 116 is sandwiched against the stud mounting 120.

Figure 5 illustrates a third exemplary embodiment of the present invention in which there is provided a stud earring 212, a dangling element 214, and an intermediary connecting member 216. The stud earring 212 includes a bezel wire 221 for securing a

round stone 223 therein, a U or V-shaped (herein considered as a conically-shaped basket) support wire 225 extending out therefrom, a post 128 attached to the support wire 225 at a point of attachment 222, and a nut 236 engagable with the post 228 for securing the stud earring 212 to the ear. The dangling element 214 has a wire loop or hook 246 extending therefrom and is the same in structure and function as that shown in the proceeding embodiments. The intermediary connecting member 216 permits removable engagement of the stud earring 212 and the dangle element 214. The intermediary connecting member 216 is shaped to fit over the post 228 and to engage an exterior surface of one or more of the support wires 225 in such a way that the intermediary connecting member 216 is disposed behind the stud earring 212. In this manner, the connecting member 216 is not generally visible from a frontal elevation. The intermediary connecting member 216 is thus sandwiched between the wearer's ear lobe and the stud earring 212.

The intermediary connecting member 216 includes a jump ring 252 and a base 260. The jump ring 252 extends outward from the base 260 in a downward direction for removably and flexibly engaging the wire loop or hook 246 of the dangling element 214. The jump ring 252 can be angled with respect to the base 260 so that the dangle element 214 lines up with the front of the stud earring 212. The base 260 is shaped so as to engage the support

wire 225 while supporting the dangle element 214 in position under and adjacent to the stud earring 212. Notches 272 can be concavely fraised at the point of contact where the base 260 engages the support wire 225. The notches 272 allow the intermediary connecting member 216 to sit closer against the stud earring 212. Beveled areas (not shown) may be formed in the base 260 so that the intermediary connecting member 216 does not engage the stone 223 when the intermediary connecting member 216 is sandwiched against the stud earring 212.

In use, the hook of the dangle element is first inserted into the loop of the intermediary connecting member so that it removably and flexibly dangles therefrom. Alternatively, the loop of the intermediary connecting member is fixedly and flexibly attached to the loop of the dangle element so that it flexibly dangles therefrom. The intermediary connecting member is then inserted over the post so that it removably engages the wires of the stud basket mounting. The post is then inserted into the ear lobe of the wearer and then nut positioned on the post behind the ear lobe to secure the earring on the ear. The intermediary connecting member thereby positions the dangle element adjacent the conical stud mounting and allows the stud mounting to be wore either alone, or dressed up with any one of a variety of different dangle elements.

Although the present invention has been described with reference to particular embodiments,

workers skilled in the art will recognize that changes may be made in form and detail without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.